

Domestic Violence

- Domestic violence is the most common but least reported crime in the United States.
- Over 40% of the women murdered in this country are killed by their husbands or lovers, usually after having been beaten by these men for years.
- Up to one half of all wives are beaten at least once by their husbands.
- Nationwide, at least 94% of all cases of partner abuse involve a man beating a woman.
- Abuse happens in all classes and races. It occurs at every level of income and education.
- Violence in the home usually becomes more severe and more frequent over time. The abuser's apologies do not mean that the violence will not occur again.
- Children who grow up in violent homes come to believe that violence is normal. They come to believe that it is an acceptable way to control someone else. The majority of adult violent prisoners were raised in violent homes.
- Violence is often part of a pattern of threats, insults, insane jealousy, explosive temper, and attempts to isolate and overpower the woman.

MYTH: A man's home is his castle. No one should interfere with the family.

REALITY: Battery is a crime! No one has the right to beat another person. It is your home, too. You have the right to a life free from fear and physical abuse.

MYTH: A woman who gets beaten brings it on herself by nagging or provoking her spouse.

REALITY: Women are beaten for reasons as ridiculous as - the dinner was cold; the TV was tuned to the wrong channel; the baby was crying. The fact is that abusive men refuse to control their violent impulses. Even where the man might have reason to be angry, he has no right to express his anger violently. You

are not responsible for his violent behavior!

MYTH: A woman who stays with her husband or boyfriend after being beaten must like to be beaten.

REALITY: Being beaten hurts, and nobody likes it. There are many reasons why women stay with abusive men, including their fear of further violence, the financial hardship of leaving, their emotional attachment to their partners and their belief that families should stay together.

MYTH: Calling the police will automatically result in jail and a loss of employment for the abuser.

REALITY: Unless the violence is extremely serious, the abuser is unlikely to spend more than a few hours in jail. Studies have shown that arrest is often an effective way to prevent further violence. (In addition, police will assist the victims of domestic violence.)

a relative, a neighbor, or the police.

Victims of domestic violence come from all walks of life, all cultures, all income groups, all ages, all religions. They share feelings of helplessness, isolation, guilt, fear, and shame.

Are You Abused?

Does the person you love...

- "Track" all of your time?
- Constantly accuse you of being unfaithful?
- Discourage your relationships with family and friends?
- Prevent you from working or attending school?
- Criticize you for little things?
- Anger easily when drinking or using other drugs?
- Control all finances and force you to account in detail for what you spend?
- Humiliate you in front of others?
- Destroy personal property or sentimental items?
- Hit, punch, slap, kick, or bite you or the children?
- Use or threaten to use a weapon against you?
- Threaten to hurt you or the children?
- Force you to have sex against your will?

As many as four million women in this country suffer some kind of violence at the hands of their husbands or boyfriend s each year. Very few will tell anyone -- a friend,

If you find yourself saying yes to any of these -- it's time to get help.

Don't Ignore the Problem

- Talk to someone. Part of the abuser's power comes from secrecy. Victims are often ashamed to let anyone know about intimate family problems. Go to a friend or neighbor, or call a domestic violence hotline to talk to a counselor.
- Plan ahead and know what you will do if you are attacked again. If you decide to leave, choose a place to go; set aside some money. Put important papers together - - marriage license, birth certificates, checkbooks -- in a place where you can get them quickly.
- Learn to think independently. Try to plan for the future and set goals for yourself.

If You Are Hurt, What Can You Do?

There are no easy answers, but there are things you can do to protect yourself.

- Call the police or sheriff. Assault, even by family members, is a crime. The police often have information about shelters and other agencies that help victims of domestic violence.
- Leave, or have someone come and stay with you. Go to a battered women's shelter -- call a crisis hotline in your community or a health center to locate a shelter. If you believe that you, and your children, are in danger -- leave immediately.
- Get medical attention from your doctor or a hospital emergency room. Ask the staff to photograph your injuries and keep detailed records in case you decide to take legal action.
- Contact your family court for information about a civil protection order that does not involve criminal charges or penalties.

Have You Hurt Someone In Your Family?

- Accept the fact that your violent behavior will destroy your family. Be aware that you break the law when you physically hurt someone.
- Take responsibility for your actions and get help.
- When you feel tension building, get away. Work off the angry energy through a walk, a project, a sport.

- Call a domestic violence hotline or health center and ask about counseling and support groups for people who batter.

The High Costs of Domestic Violence

- Men and women who follow their parents' example and use violence to solve conflicts are teaching the same destructive behavior to their children.
- Jobs can be lost or careers stalled because of injuries, arrests, or harassment.
- Violence may even result in death.